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The Week

THE military crisis in China for the moment overshadows all political developments. A battle between the Peking and Canton armies for the control of Shanghai is impending, a few miles from the city. It will be fought out of range of the guns of foreign battleships and, unless the British authorities have gone entirely mad, without the aid of foreign troops. Under these conditions, it is generally agreed by those on the ground that Canton is likely to win. In addition to well armed, disciplined troops it has a powerful psychological weapon: its record of success in the recent past and the fact that it is fighting "for the liberation of China." If the outcome is as predicted, Shanghai will fall, and the Nationalists will get control of the rich Yangtse Valley and will receive at least two-thirds of the government revenues upon which Peking has in the past depended. Great difficulties will still, of course, need to be solved before Canton can describe itself as controlling all China; yet it can hardly be denied that as far as foreign domination is concerned, the capture of Shanghai would be a Chinese Yorktown. The western powers would thereafter be able to remain only on sufferance; and it is safe to say that their legal status would be very drastically redefined and delimited. It is always hard for any generation to recognize an "historic event" when it is taking place; but no one needs to assume the rôle of a prophet to say that what happens during the next few weeks in China will be of the most critical importance in the whole story of the relation between West and East.

THE answer of the British government to President Coolidge's invitation to participate in another naval disarmament conference is in form an acceptance but in substance a warning. It says in effect that while it is delighted to talk over the possibility of further limitation, it cannot be expected to tie its own hands or to modify its existing policy of cruiser and submarine building. If, consequently, Mr. Coolidge decides to go ahead with a Three-Power Conference, he should not cherish any illusions about the kind of results which he is likely to achieve. We doubt whether the British admiralty will agree to scrap a single one of the cruisers which it has built or to abandon one which it is building. Nor will it bind itself not to increase its program of future construction, if in its opinion its interests require additional protection against French or Italian naval enterprise. These provisos are serious, and they will make it difficult to reach an agreement, but they should not, in our opinion, make it impossible. President Coolidge is justified in proceeding with his conference, provided he carefully watches his step.

THE question of the comparative future construction of cruisers by the United States and Great Britain will, of course, be the chief bone of contention between the two countries. The modern cruiser is a fast, heavily armed vessel, which in the event of war would count considerably in the comparative ability of two fleets to control the sea. The British navy has at present forty of them in commission, as compared to ten in the American navy and nineteen in the Japanese. In addition, Great Britain is building fourteen new ones and Japan six, while the

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United States is proposing to build three. This lack of cruisers might, in the case of war either with Japan or Great Britain, well prove to be a decisive disadvantage to the American navy. What, then, is to be done? The British representatives at the Conference will insist that the world-wide distribution of the British Empire justifies their government in building and operating a comparatively large number of cruisers, and there will obviously be a great deal of truth in the contention. On the other hand, the American government will not like to have its naval equality with Great Britain, which was the major premise of the Washington Agreement, destroyed by a huge British preponderance in a minor type of vessel. It remains to be seen whether good will and ingenuity can figure any way out. There is every reason to believe that Great Britain will not scrap any of its existing vessels and also that the Admiralty will be most reluctant to abandon any part of its program of construction. In that event, one of two results is inevitable. Either the United States will accept a serious and permanent naval inferiority as compared to Great Britain or it will have to build at a huge expense thirty or forty additional cruisers. Neither of these alternatives will be agreeable or acceptable to American opinion, but for the present we prefer the first.

NO ONE could ask a more overwhelming victory than the Supreme Court decision in the Elk Hills case gives to the government. Doheny's leases, from which he expected to make a hundred million dollars, are canceled. He is not to be reimbursed for the expenditure of some $10,000,000 he has already made at Pearl Harbor. The Court declares that the leases were "tainted with fraud"; but even if they were not, they would still be invalid, since the leasing policy of Secretary Fall is declared to have been illegal. The 1920 oil leasing act did not authorize the wholesale removal of the government's oil from the ground, and its sale or exchange, the decision says, but was meant in fact to conserve the oil. This section of the decision is especially significant because of the similar case, involving the Sinclair leases at Teapot Dome, which comes up before the Court in a few weeks. It is believed that the present ruling foreshadows the cancelation of the Sinclair leases as well. They have already, our readers will remember, been stigmatized by the Circuit Court of Appeals, of St. Louis, as "tainted with favoritism, collusion and corruption." The decision of the Supreme Court more than offsets the acquittal of Fall and Doheny by a District of Columbia jury last December. It is a final and irrefutable answer to those Republican newspapers and politicians who so long insisted that the oil scandals existed only in the fevered imagination of Democratic Senators.

THOSE who wrote the President's message vetoing the McNary-Haugen bill had a broad target to aim at, and they hit it not only in the bulls-eye, but in every other place. The bulls-eye argument is, of course, that the bill would not operate as its advocates desired, and hence would not benefit the farmer. We see few flaws in the excellent reasons advanced in support of this thesis, from the difficulty of collecting the equalization fee to the likelihood of increased production under price maintenance. The message would, however, have been much stronger if this single shaft had been left quivering in the centre of the target. Unfortunately the others came so thick and fast that they split one another. If the measure will not be effective in raising farm prices, why attack it because it is intended to fix prices? And why say in one part of the message, "The evidence is all too convincing that agriculture has not been receiving its fair share of the national income since the War," while in another part the bill is condemned because "nothing is more certain than that such price fixing would upset the normal exchange relationship existing in the open market." The farmers have a right to ask Mr. Coolidge: Which do you really want? Low agricultural prices existing in the open market, or a better share of the national income for agriculture? It is difficult to escape the conclusion that Mr. Coolidge would have vetoed a measure which would have accomplished the ends desired, and that he was lucky in having such a vulnerable and clumsy law to deal with.

NOT courage and decisiveness, but a choice of the lesser of two evils, was exemplified in the McNary-Haugen veto. Think of Mr. Coolidge's relationship with his party, with his main supporters, with the chief sources of campaign contributions, if he had not vetoed the bill. In spite of the fact that the New Republic has expressed distrust in the measure, we find the congratulations pouring in on the President from centres of manufacture and finance a bit revolting. This disgust is increased when we read in the message such palpable insincerities as, "It is not long since the government was spending vast sums through the Department of Justice exerting every effort to break up combinations that were raising the cost of living," and "it runs counter to the well considered principle that a healthy economic condition is best maintained through a free play of competition." An administration which has been more tender to big business than any in American history, an administration the chief achievement of which is the untaxing of the rich, a President whose Cabinet includes the principal owner of what is probably the nearest approach to a 100 percent monopoly in the country, lectures the poor competition-ridden farmers on their pathetically ineffective attempt to control prices. An administration which supports and is supported by the protective tariff system righteously condemns the special privileges which the producers of certain crops aimed to gain for themselves. Phariseeism like this is not cause

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But unfortunately no corresponding specimen of his jests with the young noblemen has been preserved.

In 1677, when he was thirty-two, his career reached its climax, and he was made Master of Trinity. The magnificent appointment proved to be his ruin. Faced with the governance of the great college over which the omniscient Barrow had lately ruled and which the presence of Newton still made illustrious, the Doctor's sense of responsibility, of duty, and of inadequacy became almost pathological. His days and his nights passed in one ceaseless round of devotion, instruction, and administration, reading, writing, and abstemiousness. He had no longer any time for the young and the fair; no time for a single particle of enjoyment; no time even for breakfast. His rule was strict beyond all measure and precedent. With relentless severity he pursued the undergraduates through their exercises and punished them for their peccadilloes. His unpopularity became intense: he was openly jeered at in the cloisters, and one evening a stone came whizzing through the window of the room in the Lodge where he was sitting, and fell in the fire at his feet. Nor was he consoled by the friendship of his equals. The Senior Fellows were infuriated by his sour punctilio; a violent feud sprang up; there were shocking scenes at the council meetings. "Let me be buried in the ante-chapel," exclaimed the Master in his desperation, "so that they may trample on me dead as they have living."

And death was always before his eyes; for now a settled hypochondria was added to his other miseries. He was a prey to constant nightmare. He had little doubt that he would perish of the stone. Taking upon himself the functions of the Wise Woman, he displayed before his embarrassed friends the obvious symptoms of fatal disorder. "Gravel! Red gravel!" he gasped. In reality his actual weakness lay in quite another direction. One day he caught cold, it grew worse, his throat was affected, his uvula swelled. The inflammation continued, and before long the unhappy Doctor became convinced that his uvula would have to be cut off. All the physicians of the University were summoned, and they confessed that the case was grave. It was the age of Molière, and the practitioners of Cambridge might well have figured in the Malade Imaginaire. Their prescriptions were terrific and bizarre: drenches, "enough to purge a strong man from off his legs," accompanied by amber, to be smoked like tobacco in pipes, with astringent powders blown into the mouth through quills. The Doctor, who, with all his voluminous reading, had never heard of Diafoirus, believed every word he was told, and carried out the fearful orders with elaborate conscientiousness. The result was plain to all; in a few weeks his health was completely shattered, and his friends, to their amazement, saw him "come helmeted in Caps upon Caps, and meagre as one newly crope out of a Fever." They privately consulted the great Dr. Lower in London. He threw up his hands. "I would undertake," he said, "by the smoak of Amber alone, to put the soundest Man in the World into Convulsion Fits." But it was too late to intervene; the treatment was continued, while the Doctor struggled on with the duties of his office. Two scholars were to be publicly admonished for scandalous conduct; the Fellows assembled; the youths stood trembling; the Master appeared. Emaciated, ghastly, in his black gown, and with a mountain of caps upon his head, the extraordinary creature began a tirade of bitter and virulent reproof; when suddenly his left leg swerved beneath him, and he fell in a fit upon the ground. It was apoplexy. He was carried to his bed, where the physicians clustered round him. The one thing, they declared, that was essential was that he should never lose consciousness; if he did he would never regain it; and they therefore ordered that a perpetual noise should be made about his ears. Whereupon "there was a Consort of Tongs, Firegrate, Wainscote-Drum, and dancing of Curtains and Curtain Rings, such as would have made a sound Man mad." At that moment, old Lady North, the patient's mother and a formidable dowager, appeared upon the scene. She silenced the incredible tintinnabulation; she even silenced the faculty; and she succeeded in nursing her son back from death.

Yet there were some who averred that it would have been better had she never done so. For now the strangest of the Doctor's transformations came upon him. His recovery was not complete: his body was paralyzed on the left side; but it was in his mind that the most remarkable change had occurred. His fears had left him. His scrupulosity, his diffidence, his seriousness, even his morality—all had vanished. He lay on his bed, in reckless levity, pouring forth a stream of flippant observations, and naughty stories, and improper jokes. While his friends hardly knew which way to look, he laughed consumedly, his paralyzed features drawn up into a curiously distorted grin. He sent for a gay young scholar of the college, Mr. Warren, to sit by him and regale him with merry tales and readings from light romances. And there was worse still to follow. Attacked by epileptic seizures, he declared that the only mitigation of his sufferings lay in the continued consumption of wine. He, who had been so noted for his austerities, now tossed off, with wild exhilaration, glass after glass of the strongest sherry; the dry ascetic had become a convert to the golden gospel of la dive bouteille. In the depth of the night, the studious precincts of the Great Court of Trinity were disturbed by peculiar sounds—the high, triumphant, one-sided cackle of the Master, as he lay, with his flagon in his hand and young Mr. Warren beside him, absorbed in the abandoned, exuberant fantasies of the Curé of Meudon.

After four years of this strange existence, the Doctor died in his sleep. He was buried, as he had directed, in the ante-chapel of the college, where, under a small square stone, engraved with the ini-

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tials "J. N.," so many singular agitations came to their final rest. In his brother Roger's opinion, "the Consciousness of a well-spent Life was of great service to him," for otherwise he "might have fallen into Melancholy, Dejections, Despair, and Misconstructions of Providence." And probably Roger was right; conscientiousness is apt, in however devious a manner, to have its reward in this world. Whether it also has it in any other is another of those questions that must be referred to Dr. Whitehead.

LYTTON STRACHEY.

Washington Notes

WHAT a wonderful lot of laughs the average American misses by being a dolt about politics! What a shame it is that the ordinary citizen, allegedly educated and supposedly intelligent, is not sufficiently acute and informed in his comprehension of public men and matters to assimilate more than the material prepared for him in the daily press! How much gayer life could be if it were possible for him really to see the unconsciously funny side of the avowedly solemn show put on by these little men who now strut the national political stage. Always, in both parties and at all periods, it has undoubtedly had its humorous side; but in the Republican party, at this particular time, things are funnier than in the memory of anyone now in Washington—always provided, of course, that you view the show from the right angle. Otherwise is isn't funny in the least.

The mere fact that Calvin Coolidge is President of the United States is in itself as droll a thing of its kind as can well be imagined. Coolidge as President, Coolidge dealing with great questions of international relations, Coolidge kowtowed to by the great men of finance and business, inviting to dinner and placidly patronizing the eager and flattered publishers of the daily and weekly press with the largest mass circulation—in all this, to the few who have known Mr. Coolidge best and who are at once too clear-eyed to be blinded by the glamor of the great office he holds, and too well informed not to know what is really back of the journalistic and financial support by which he has up to now been buttressed and held up—there is irresistible humor.

Certainly, too, no one not obviously unfitted to express an opinion on anything will deny that it is a wonderful joke to have John Garibaldi Sargent, one of the leading lawyers of Ludlow, Attorney General of the United States. If you know the whole story, John Garibaldi as Attorney General is just a little funnier to contemplate than Mr. Coolidge as President.

The amusing features of having Frank B. Kellogg, who, since the Nicaragua-Mexican mess, has done more to justify his Senate sobriquet of "Nervous Nellie" than before, are too patent to need pointing out, and make it possible to pass more quickly to the suggestion that the case of that august personage, Andrew W. Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury, is not altogether without its humorous aspects. I know that this will be considered treason of a terrible sort by presidents of national banks and trust companies, by newspaper publishers who have dined at the White House, sailed on the Mayflower, or who are in the higher-bracket class as income-tax payers, and by most successful business and professional men who take seriously the eloquent eulogies of this administration by the Saturday Evening Post publicists —who were at one time such frequent White House guests that it was hard to go in or out without bumping into one.

Perhaps Mr. Mellon is not funny personally, but is there not, just the same, something essentially comic in having him, the third richest man in the country, interested in more income-paying corporations than any other individual, the owner of great banks and trust companies that are in constant contact with the department he directs, the controller of more companies that do business with the Internal Revenue Bureau than any other single person, personally the head of the department where these business interests of his have to come to have their taxes adjusted and their claims adjudicated? Also, is there not some slight humor when the punishing power of this department of which Mr. Mellon is the head is used in an attempt to collect a claim of many millions of back taxes from his personal enemy in the Senate, who charged on the floor of that body, and still does, that the effort is an act of reprisal, due entirely to his leadership in the Senate investigation of Mr. Mellon's department?

I must confess that this situation is not without its humorous appeal to me. To my mind, when it is fully grasped, it also makes ridiculous the question asked me so often by apparently earnest and intelligent men—some of them, strange as it may seem, members of the Senate—why neither Mr. Coolidge nor Mr. Mellon, both concededly men of personal honesty and unblemished character, seemed unable to see the argument against putting men on boards or commissions where they have regulatory power over corporations and concerns in which they previously had long and intimate financial interest. It even seems funny to me that those stern Republican Senators who opposed Mr. Cyrus Woods's appointment to the Interstate Commerce Commission, because of "the principle of the thing," do not appear to see that if they hold fast to that principle it logically compels them to assume the attitude that Mr. Mellon himself ought not to be Secretary of the Treasury.

However, enough about Mr. Mellon and Mr. Coolidge and Mr. Sargent and Mr. Kellogg. If they are jokes, as they often seem to the irreverent, they are by this time pretty old jokes, and I did not really start out this week to write about them at all. What got me off on this tack about the humorous side of the administration was not a sudden realization of it, so far as Mr. Coolidge in the White House is concerned. That has always appealed to my sense of the ridiculous. I appreciate that under some conditions it would not be a thing to laugh about. In a time of such unprecedented national prosperity and well-being, however, and in the absence of any public crisis requiring a strong hand, it seems to me much better to laugh at it, and the people who permit it, than to get irritated by it, as, I regret to say, some of my most orthodox Republican friends show a deplorable tendency to do.

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What I really started to write about today were the two or three recent developments that ought to give the American people a good laugh, if only they knew enough to see the point of such things, which apparently they don't. One of these was the comment of Republican leaders in New York, printed in all the New York newspapers, in which they strongly disapproved Nicholas Murray Butler's opinion that the third-term tradition would be fatal to a Coolidge reëlection, and that the wet and dry issue ought to be faced by the Republican party instead of being dodged. They were quoted as declaring Dr. Butler's words to be "indelicate and uncalled for" and "calculated to make trouble." They feared he might "raise an issue over which there would be room for wide differences of opinion." There may be in me an ineradicable tendency to scoff at serious things, but try as I will, I cannot help thinking this funny.

Likewise, there was some fun to be got out of Secretary of the Navy Wilbur's speech in New York, in which he pulled out the old Bolshevist bogey again and seriously warned us against the "Red Menace." So far as I am concerned, the amusing part of this speech was not so much in what the good Curtis said on this occasion as that it seemed it must surely recall, to those with memories longer than a minute, his performance during the 1924 campaign, when he dug up the old Bloody Shirt out in Denver and wildly waved it until he was yanked off the stump by wire, rushed back to Washington by aeroplane, and, it was publicly believed, made aware of the intense pain in the stomach he had caused the austere Calvin. So far as I can recall, this is one of the few speeches Mr. Wilbur has made since the 1924 incident. And here he is seeing red again. Of course he is much safer this time. For one thing, there is no campaign on. For another, the State Department has recently and more publicly seen more redly than he. Still, I don't care what anyone says—it is funny.

One other funny thing I should like to mention before I close—and that is the Borah-Butler debate on the prohibition issue in Boston before the Roosevelt Club in April. I admit it is necessary to use the imagination to see the fun in this, because the debate itself is not funny at all. It ought to be interesting and worth hearing. The funny phase comes when you stop to consider the feelings of Calvin Coolidge while it is going on. Here are Borah and Butler, two notable members of his own party, both of whom he has often entertained at the White House, who say they are his "personal friends," one of whom publicly proclaims that he cannot be reëlected and the other of whom certainly thinks he ought not to be, agreeing to debate on an issue that is likely to cause him more political embarrassment in the long run than farm relief. And in Boston. And at a Roosevelt Club. There is not a doubt in the world that the President finds himself in full accord with those New York Republican leaders who deplore the whole business as "indelicate and uncalled for."

There is a lot of fun in life—even political life—if you know how to recognize it.

T. R. B.

Washington.

The Road to Rome

The Road to Rome, by Robert Emmet Sherwood. The Playhouse. January 31, 1926.

THERE are a dozen ways to begin an article on this play of Mr. Sherwood's, which is one of the most interesting ventures of the season; what I had best begin by saying is that I have only now seen it, some four weeks after its opening. Some changes may have gone on, no doubt, since that time, a shifting of accents. At any rate I had the sense of an audience that had come largely on a pornographic hope, dreaming of smart lustful epigrams and naughty inversions of stately histories. At the same time, I had the sense that the direction Mr. Merivale's and Miss Cowl's performances have taken must have grown more or less a disappointment to such visitors. I had the feeling that on both these players the idea that is inherent in the play, whether it is carried through or not, has taken deeper hold in the course of their performances; they appear to be little concerned with the more risqué possibilities of the lines and touched by the hint of the glory and exaltation of life that persists in the theme.

As for the author, I feel no surer than he evidently did as to what he meant by the play. He has launched, how innocently I could not tell, a beautiful theme: in the person of the woman, the finer mind of Greece, its subtler values, its sense of life, its final analysis, its zest for living, is presented in the midst of a naïve, progressive, patriotic, materialistic and platitudinous Rome. Her husband, the celebrated Fabius Maximus the Delayer, adores her because of her beauty and perfection, because she puzzles and fascinates him with her joy of life, her boredom, her scorn for the simple, profitable ideals that he and the Romans live by. His ideals are sentimental without passion, he is too exhausted with succeeding in Rome to have any energy left for love or at least sex. Hannibal nears the gates of Rome, Fabius is made dictator. Amytis hears of Hannibal, he comes into her dreams, idealistic and erotic. The Roman ladies are to perish for Rome; she sets out on the pretense of joining her mother at Ostia, but really to visit Hannibal.

At Hannibal's camp Amytis is to be put to death as a spy. In her talk with Hannibal she sets forth her Greek ideas. Military ambition, she adds, is an affair of medals and schoolboy orations. And what does it come to—all this driving for success, power and glory, and this confused forgetfulness of what she calls the human equation? Before she dies, she expects at least the usual practice of great victories, ravishing the women. Hannibal, after much resistance, falls into her spell, she passes the night in his tent. In the last act, Fabius comes with his delegation of Romans, trying to bluff it out. Hasdrubal urges Hannibal on to Rome. Amytis puts Hannibal and his soul in the balance: will he be a conquering empty child, or will he follow his own far spirit; will he be above this vanity of power and striving, the futility of conquest, and leave Rome to her own destruction from within? He orders the army on to Capua and departs from the scene; Fabius thinks that Amytis has come there to save him and Rome.

How much or what is in such a material Mr. Sherwood has not been able to decide for himself, evidently. At one moment he seems a poet, at another a wise-cracker, and

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again a writer of historical burlesque, now obvious and now witty. I think The Road to Rome a most considerable achievement, nevertheless; I found it far less bourgeois and tedious than Mr. Erskine's Helen of Troy, and much more suggestive of a certain hard scorn that the poetic can have. The family of the play is obviously that large one in which belong Landor's magnificent Conversations and letters of Pericles and Aspasia, Andreyev's Sabine Women, Bernard Shaw's Cæsar and Cleopatra, and many other examples of classic material used to illumine or satirize modern life. The method in general in The Road to Rome is to take pot shots at our present-day problems and foibles in America, to put into Roman mouths our Rotarian platitude and into Roman souls our naïve pursuit of ends that we cannot analyze with relation to ourselves, sentiments we pick up by crowd imitation, and a certain naïve innocence of personal reflection and thought. The main theme in the play, or what might be the main theme and doubtless is, is presented through this Greek woman; it is difficult at best to get into stage terms; and in the third act Mr. Sherwood gets it muddled up and sidetracked into remarks about war and its futility. This is a natural but unfortunate turn to take, since to most of the audience the theme can then be regarded as more or less pacifistic and so labeled, at a great sacrifice of the essential point. It is in this scene, particularly, between Amytis and Hannibal in the third act, that Mr. Sherwood needs to think out his matter, find out exactly what he does mean, and try to drive it home to the audience.

Intellectually, the points in The Road to Rome, the social criticisms, revolutionary objections and so on, are easily familiar to the people who do much reading or thinking nowadays in America or hear any conversation. To most of a Broadway theatre audience these ideas, if the brunt of them were really caught or the point seen, would mean a row, violent ructions for Coolidge, loyalty, 100 percent and all the other popular indignations of mediocrity. The Road to Rome may be described as the kind of play that, if it had been given in Amytis's Athens in Socrates's day, would have brought Aristophanes down on its head, as subversive of social stability, national morality, character and patriotism, as flippant and harmful to citizens.

Mr. Lee Simonson's settings for the play are ample and handsome, especially Hannibal's quarters in the Temple of the Vestal Virgins, with the rich curtains one behind another. Miss Jane Cowl brings to the rôle of Amytis the persuasion of her beauty and a dignity of approach that must deepen considerably the meaning of the part, and that helps us toward a knowledge of what Mr. Sherwood at least might have meant by it. Miss Cowl could very wisely sharpen her attack at times in the witty effects. If also she would vary the speed of her second act more, she might give us more of the intellectual excitement and restlessness of this rebellious Greek in the midst of Rotarian Rome, and give us more, too, of this woman's abounding love of life and of what must seem to her Roman husband her fickleness of mood, her odd delight in the useless qualities of things, and her strangely perverse taste for what one of her own foolish philosophers would have called the immortal in mortality.

To put Mr. Philip Merivale into Hannibal's rôle was a brilliant piece of casting. Mr. Merivale has taken the character that the dramatist supplied him and developed it toward a curious completeness. This Hannibal is a mystic all his life; his first mysticism a hatred for Rome—as a baby his father had lifted him up to Baal and pledged him as Rome's destroyer—his second the dream of his own reality in the midst of a blind and extraneous world of men and action: Amytis awoke that in him. This classical hero that Mr. Merivale gives us belongs to the art of the Renaissance, the early sixteenth century perhaps; such a figure as we might see in Mantegna, noble like that, flowered with grace and fine line, or in one of those young men in Piero della Francesca, elegant, distinguished, subjective. Mr. Merivale keeps his satire or parody of history from any vulgarity or smartiness, and lifts his portrayal into a grave, witty poetry. The figure he creates is full of Italian classical exoticism, noble and effete, the intense thought turning inward, with that peculiar enervation of Renaissance Neo-Platonism, decadent, disturbing, marked with its own kind of knowledge and beautiful, wistful melancholy. For a certain sophistication and subtlety it is the most interesting performance of the season.

STARK YOUNG.

A Number of Things

THE LEXICON OF PROHIBITION

THE following is a partial list of words denoting drunkenness now in common use in the United States. They have been arranged, as far as possible, in order of the degrees of intensity of the conditions which they represent, beginning with the mildest stages and progressing to the more serious.

lit	tight
squiffy	full
oiled	wet
lubricated	high
owled	horseback
edged	liquored
jingled	pickled
piffed	ginned
piped	shicker (Yiddish)
sloppy	spifflicated
woozy	primed
happy	organized
half screwed	featured
half cocked	pie-eyed
half shot	cock-eyed
half seas over	wall-eyed
fried	glassy-eyed
stewed	bleary-eyed
boiled	hoary-eyed
bent	over the Bay
sprung	four sheets in the wind
scrooched	crocked
jazzed	loaded
jagged	leaping
canned	screeching
corked	lathered
corned	plastered
potted	soused
hooted	bloated
slopped	polluted
tanked	saturated

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stinko	full as a tick
blind	loaded for bear
stiff	loaded to the muzzle
under the table	loaded to the plimsoll mark
wapsed down	to have a bun on
paralyzed	to have a slant on
ossified	to have a skate on
out like a light	to have a snootful
passed out cold	to have a skinful
embalmed	to draw a blank
buried	to pull a shut-eye
blotto	to pull a Daniel Boone
	to have a rubber drink
lit up like the sky	to have a hangover
lit up like the commonwealth	to have a head
lit up like a Christmas tree	to have the jumps
lit up like a store window	to have the shakes
lit up like a church	to have the zings
fried to the hat	to have the heeby-jeebies
slopped to the ears	to have the screaming-meemies
stewed to the gills	to have the whoops and jingles
boiled as an owl	to burn with a low blue flame

Some of these, such as *loaded* and *full,* are a little old-fashioned now; but they are still understood. Others, such as *cock-eyed* and *oiled,* which are included in the Drinker's Dictionary compiled by Benjamin Franklin (and containing two hundred and twenty-eight terms) seem to be enjoying a new popularity. It is interesting to note that one hears nowadays comparatively rarely of people going on *sprees, toots, tears, jags, bats, brannigans* or *benders.* All these terms suggest, not merely extreme drunkenness, but also an exceptional occurrence, a violent breaking away by the drinker from the conditions of his normal life. It is possible that their partial disappearance is to be accounted for by the fact that this kind of fierce protracted drinking has now become universal, a familiar feature of social life, instead of a disreputable escapade. On the other hand, the vocabulary of social drinking, as exemplified by the above list, seems to have become particularly rich: one gets the impression that more nuances are nowadays discriminated than was the case before prohibition. Thus, *fried, stewed* and *boiled* all convey distinctly different ideas; and *cock-eyed, plastered, owled, embalmed* and *ossified* bring into play quite different images. *Wapsed down* is a rural expression, also used in connection with crops which have been ruined by a storm; *featured* is a theatrical word, which applies to a stage at which the drinker is stimulated to believe strongly in his ability to sing a song, to tell a funny story or to execute a dance; *organized* is properly applied to a condition of thorough preparation for the efficient conduct of a formidable evening; and *blotto,* of English origin, denotes a condition of blank unconsciousness.

A Home-Coming

The station platform is dark, underground; the open sunlit space before the tunnel is dazzling in contrast. Here it is all one shadow, cool and subdued. No trains are going in or out; the station seems almost deserted. A lone electric locomotive slips past, its drive-shafts clanking. The little crowd of men strung out along the platform stand in patient attitudes; two or three talk together, their words low-voiced and confidential. The Mayor is coming back from a vacation in Havana: these are all reporters and professional photographers, with a few politicians from the City Hall. One of the camera-men tests the fuse of his flashlight. Somebody borrows a pencil. The headlight of the train appears in the tunnel. As the train slides to a stop, the Mayor is seen on the rear platform, flanked by his cronies. Everyone calls greetings, and crowds forward to shake his hand. The Mayor's sharp, nervous face peers out under his rakish slouch hat; he twists his head with a quick, bird-like movement and smiles mockingly. It is like a dress rehearsal; everyone is hurried but matter-of-fact, taking it all as old stuff, but underneath they are all tense, excited, thinking of the afternoon editions. Between the bursts of the flashlights, the Mayor, leaning on the railed vestibule of his car, makes a sudden, clownish face, and he says huskily, "Oh, how glad I am to get back to work!" The crowd laughs softly, and the Mayor sets a blank stare to the next salvo. Now the photographers have finished with him, and the reporters push into the car for their interview on the transit situation.

Camera Angles

THE reviewers of moving pictures in the New York dailies have begun to protest slightly against the prevalence in American-made films of "Camera Angles." The German film, Variety, is considered responsible for this novelty in movie technique, and is responsible in the sense that it was the first successful *narrative* film in which continuous movement of the camera was employed. The alert news-reel photographers learned to shoot their objects from above and below, at every angle in the circle, years ago; as I said in this place a long time ago, the creators of short subjects have been exploiting the proper technique of the camera with much more intelligence than the directors of regular features.

The film which caused the most complaint is The Third Degree, and to a certain extent the complaint is justified. The value of the Camera Angle, and of other technical devices which are used with it, is to break down the monotony of the straight picture, to create new and happy combinations on the screen, and to hasten the action by letting the eye take in a variety of objects in significant positions. In this the word "significant" is supremely important; unless we are using the camera tricks purely for their value as novelty, there has to be in each case a reason for the Camera Angle and a specific effect produced. At the beginning of The Third Degree we see a circus barker, and the attractions he announces flit into his background in a wild and entirely successful confusion. In the scene where the police attempt to extort a confession from an innocent man, other tricks of false perspective and distortion, not particularly imaginative, are used with some justification. But elsewhere, the projection of objects out of their normal positions acts merely to break the continuous visual image as effectively as the old-fashioned close-up.

This is an essential point—it is, in fact, a point at which the American directors of the moving picture need to be particularly suspicious of an imported technical effect for which they themselves are æsthetically unprepared. One

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says this quite freely, because Mr. Curtiz, the director of The Third Degree, is himself not an American, and indicates that a bad principle of art is international in its effect. In The Third Degree he has accomplished something so colossally wrong—although it is only a matter of a few feet of film each time—that he may serve as a terrible warning to other directors. Briefly, he has managed to immobilize the moving picture. There is, for example, a long shot with a principal character in the foreground; using this character as a motionless pivot, the director has swung the camera around to bring in other portions of the scene. The result is precisely a cyclorama of a show-window full of wax dummies—the essence of the moving picture has disappeared.

This is not so purely a technical point as it may seem. It goes directly to the roots of our ideas of the moving picture. The angle at which a camera is held to produce a given effect is a legitimate use of the instrument, so long as the object on which it is trained remains in the cinematic field. This does not mean that every object must be moving at every moment; it means only that, essentially, everything which the movie gives must be expressed through movement, and if the camera is moved, the object also must give the effect of movement. In The Third Degree, a person rising from a chair was so photographed, through camera tricks, that all continuity of movement was lost, and a natural change of position was dissected into several photographs in repose.

Camera Angles have made the screen much more interesting than it was before. Overworking them irritates spectators accustomed to duller and more obvious camera methods, and this is desirable, since the lethargy of the spectators must be somehow overcome. But abusing the new technique by inappropriate exploitation will only ruin a good thing.

When A Man Loves is an adaptation of Manon Lescaut, which Mr. Alan Crosland has made in the pre-angle manner and on a scenario which derived comparatively little from the Abbé Prévost's novel. Since neither the book nor the author is mentioned on the program, we may take it that the film intends to stand on its own feet, and we are therefore not justified in objecting to the happy ending. Nevertheless, one doesn't forget the book entirely—after all, the characters are named Manon and Des Grieux. In face of this extremely lush and elaborate picture, one thinks of the brevity, the austere passion of the original. One thinks even that the Abbé Prévost was a better scenarist than Miss Bess Meredyth; there is a go to the book which the movie, with its two hours of activity which is seldom significant action, entirely lacks.

When A Man Loves is another exploitation of John Barrymore. He is extremely handsome, as a priest, in an operatic way, and agile, as a swordsman, in the manner of Douglas Fairbanks. It is extraordinary how silly these qualities can be made to appear. Barrymore alone fights off a score of men with an infinite amount of dashing about and not even one clear picture of how he accomplishes his miracle. What has happened here happens universally in the movies. The director could not be realistic, because the absurdity of the action was too obvious; and he seems to have lacked a capacity to give the picture a style in which all absurdities would be acceptable.

In one respect, this picture is a success—the treatment of the pictorial beauty of Miss Dolores Costello. I credit this to the director, because Miss Costello appears also in The Third Degree with almost all of that beauty wasted. Her shoulders, neck, and head are elements in the composition of ravishing pictures, and Mr. Crosland has used them to perfection. He has not in any way done as well by Mr. Barrymore's eminently handsome face and figure. This is disappointing to the women in the audience. To Mr. Barrymore, it may be equally disappointing that he has not yet added one single thing to the moving picture, that he has never yet held out for a story and a director worthy of his extraordinary talent.

The moving picture, which has staggered too long in the dramatic parade, has now lurched another false step, by attempting to synchronize action with the voice. The result so far, in the Vitaphone, has been the equivalent of a bad phonograph added to a bad moving picture. Occasionally a voice registers clearly, and I fancy that an Al Jolson would be entertaining to watch, but the total effect so far produced indicates that the movie is most effective when it is most movie. The particular things in the Vitaphone which I saw were all uninteresting, and the scrofulous operatic sets, with all the absurdities of operatic acting, did nothing to reconcile me to the new development. At one moment, when the synchronizing failed, I was genuinely amused, but the people around me seemed to think my laughter misplaced in the presence of a great art. I foresee that, in the future, efforts will be made to introduce speech into the regular narrative movie, at which point the death of the pure movie will be only a matter of time.

GILBERT SELDES.

Long Feud

Where, without bloodshed, can there be
A more relentless enmity
Than the long feud fought silently

Between man and the growing grass?
Man's the aggressor, for he has
Weapons to humble and harass

The impudent spears that charge upon
His sacred privacy of lawn.
He mows them down, and they are gone

Only to lie in wait, although
He builds above and digs below
Where never a root would dare to go.

His are the triumphs till the day
There's no more grass to cut away,
And, weary of labor, weary of play,

Having exhausted every whim,
He stretches out each conquering limb.
And then the small grass covers him.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

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Raspberries from England

The Babbitt Warren, by C. E. M. Joad. New York: Harper and Brothers. 247 pages. $2.50.

WE'RE getting it in the neck, and if by this time our neck isn't rough we have only ourselves to blame. The Mexicans and the Nicaraguans would like to poison us, the Chinese are throwing us out, the French love us like a creditor, and what the Russians think of us is not safe to print so long as Mr. Kellogg holds the job of keeping out nasty little red thoughts. As for the English—but that is an old story, a little bit unhappier than usual at this moment on account of some unfortunate debts. But there are other reasons besides the debts, and they recur like the seasons: our size, our crudity, our ignorance, our use of a language which once was theirs and is flowing back to England again plus all sorts of howlers and inventions and slang and jazzifications. The latest shower of mud and thistles is from the hand of C. E. M. Joad, a philosopher by profession, and for recreation a traveler, with his mind only, through the civilizations of other countries. For Mr. Joad, as he confesses, "has not had the privilege of visiting the United States." So that his generalizations possess, in addition to a good deal of fluent peevishness, and a good deal more dull, anæmic rage, the bathos of distance. Here are some of them:

> It is largely because of their baths that Americans are always washing themselves.
>
> When in America science is taught and endowed, it is taught and endowed solely for its potential use to the business man and the statesman.
>
> Oblivious of the fact that only small countries are happy, the American can scarcely hide his contempt for the citizens of Holland or Denmark.
>
> The power of money has so permeated every stratum of American society, that to the American no other object of desire seems conceivable.
>
> The artist, the scientist, the musician, the statesman and the author are held of no account unless their claims to consideration are backed by money, while the rich man is king of any company he chooses to enter.
>
> . . . the vulgarity, ostentation and even brutality of New York society.
>
> It is significant that America, where knowledge is encouraged because of its money-making capacity, has given birth to none of the great modern discoveries in physics and mathematics.
>
> America has produced no writers of genius and no indigenous literature. . . . The films are the literature of America.
>
> Whereas in Europe the height of originality is genius, in America the height of originality is skill in concealing origins.
>
> In no country is personality valued as it is in America, and in no country is it so rare.
>
> Every effort is made in America to secure uniformity. . . . Each city in the United States . . . must at any cost be known to be different from its fellows.
>
> America has a special reason for suppressing artists.
>
> "A short life and a gluttonous one," is a reasonably good ideal, and one suited to [the American] temperament.
>
> In America . . . it seems that no offense against beauty, however extravagant, brings satiety.
>
> An American's library is the receipt for the tribute paid by the pockets of stupidity to the prestige of thought.
>
> [The American desires culture and believes that] provided he pays highly enough, culture will come his way. And beauty, insulted by the coarse approaches of this crude new lover posturing in spats and white waistcoats, is entitled to revenge.
>
> Americans know how to waste money, but they do not know how to waste time. . . . Consequently they do not have afternoon tea.

To all this, pretty pat for a man who has never been here, a patient rejoinder or an intelligent refutation would be undesirable. Mr. Joad wants to believe certain things, nothing will shake his belief, and we would not trouble the placid grouch of this small mind if we could. If we reviewers could band together and punish drivel with silence, and if ill-natured stupidity were ever worth petty retaliation, this would be the occasion to exercise it. Unfortunately, Mr. Joad is going to be flattered with a good deal of book-page space, not only because we are still sensitive to the bites of cousins, even when totally removed, but because we like to discuss our own faults, which we have learned to do both more damagingly and more intelligently than Mr. Joad.

Mr. Joad's comments are not new, on either side of the water. His dislikes and his state of mind follow a well worn trail. For years he has been reading the squibs offered to their home readers by English newspaper correspondents in this country, grotesque anecdotes illustrative of our deformities, and little Americana vastly inferior to their counterparts in the American Mercury. He has been collecting them as illustrations of his thesis. Since he has not been here, he does not swear to their accuracy, but he believes them nevertheless, for his limited acquaintance with things American forces him to think that even if such reports "are not true, they ought to be. . . . Si non è vero è ben trovato." Like so many Englishmen, his prejudices about America are hungry, and he has taken good care to feed to them only those data which they can digest and thrive upon.

The illustrations for Mr. Joad's thesis can be said to provide for the latter a sort of literary Dutch courage. As for the thesis itself, it is stale and flimsy. That there may be some sense in it here and there is a possibility which his manners prompt me to suppress. Stripped of its heavy freight of interruptions, excursions, essays on God, sermons in praise of beauty and ecstasies about dirty artists, it amounts to little more than that machinery is no end in itself, that art is shy, that big cities are terrible, that automobiles are a curse, that hurry is a crime, that business is sordid, that size is a delusion, that knowledge should be pursued for its own sake, that the countryside is ruined, that our times are decadent, that efficiency is childish, that subways are ignoble, that friendship has vanished, and in sum that modern civilization is hell in all industrial countries, but most egregiously in America, upon whom, since she started the ball rolling and is the loudest, crudest, silliest industrial country of them all, the blame for the whole business is quite justly to be pinned.

Mr. Joad, though, in the shafts quoted above, he does pin his annoyance upon us, is really quite as annoyed with English civilization, and what he says about us invariably applies with equal justice to his own country, whom he somehow cannot bring himself to accuse—as if our evil customs were a scarlet fever fiendishly communicated to an innocent child. Try as he will, the blame falls upon the mother island, and his instances and illustrations have a slippery way of offering themselves to him from his own surroundings. He feels that he must say something of our cities, and then begins to talk about London, defending the use of it as an incidental example "because I happen to know it best." And then he takes as an example for his

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whole book, America, because he happens not to know it at all.

Mr. Joad's mixture of gloomy invective and pleasure in the exercise of his own irritation leads us to think that it would be useless to argue with him, that in his eyes a clear thesis will always be more valued than the chaotic truth, that there would be no point in trying to confront him with instances contrary to his thesis. It must be obvious to any of us, or to any Englishman well traveled in our country, that ever so many things have been left out of his picture of America, all our more noiseless qualities and quieter achievements, all the diversity, friendliness and intelligence which are not news, therefore not worth cabling across the Atlantic to where they will catch the eye of bilious philosophers. But Mr. Joad is incapable of being persuaded, because he doesn't want to be, any more than Methodist crusaders (whom Mr. Joad so much resembles) want to be persuaded that there is something to be said for dancing and the theatre.

After reading such a book as this, we forget all sorts of things, especially our own manners. We forget the large number of Englishmen who have understood us with sympathy, even when they were hitting between the eyes; we forget that foreigners have as much inherent right to empty the slop-pail of prejudices on our doorstep as we have right to empty ours on theirs; we forget the inconceivably asinine slanders which we have hurled at England; we forget to disentangle and rescue truth from falsehood; we forget what we have just been saying in our own back yard; we forget to remark how much of the panorama of America our critic has left out; we forget that the whole business is not very important anyhow; we forget that if this book were by an American it would fail to create even an itch beneath the great rash of Menckenitis. But it is by an Englishman, and an Englishman who has never been here. Wherefore, for some jealous defensive reason impossible to explain, our rage mounts and mounts, up the patriotic scale, until we frantically wish to wave Old Glory, hear the band play Stars and Stripes Forever and give three cheers for the Red, White and Blue. ROBERT LITTELL.

The Negro in American Life

The Negro in American Life, by Jerome Dowd. New York: The Century Company. 647 pages. $5.

THE Negro, in his unique isolation in America, has provided a tempting laboratory case for the student, and the resultant literature, voluminous and sharply controversial, reflects the tortuous trial-and-error advance of the appraising sciences themselves. Through this forward change, there has been a disabling lack of an intelligent integration of findings, some indication of what to believe in a vast mass of dogma, scattered observation, the tentative conclusions of science, and the claims of the Negroes themselves. The Negro in American Life is the culmination of twenty-five years of study. Its conception is almost encyclopædic in fullness; its tone of treatment, for the most part, guarded against passionate extremes.

Beginning with African backgrounds, the author's concern encompasses present economic status, domestic and social life, citizenship, crime, educational status, religion, art, politics, racial friction, peonage, education, the War, migration, literature, a consideration of racial equality and the various solutions of the race problem proposed. The actual execution, however, of this self-imposed task emphasizes, even more than the impressive documentation of his text, the staggering size of the undertaking, and the enormous capacity for injustice, conscious or unconscious, which reposes in the pen of one permitted to treat a huge and bristling subject by random quotations.

Strangely enough, it is information which Professor Dowd's book most lacks. His authorities are out of date, and, with some notable exceptions, there is not enough recent information to amend these inadequacies and misjudgments. The migration of more than a million Negroes from the rural South to the industrial North since 1915 has changed the sociological character of this population profoundly, south and north. The fundamental assumption that "the Negro" is everywhere and always the same leads quickly into questionable paths, and the treatment which many of the chapters get indicates that Professor Dowd has not escaped this fatal hazard. The picture, for example, of the Negro as Citizen, based upon quotations from Ray Stannard Baker's observations on venality in Springfield, Ohio, twenty-two years ago, and upon the thoroughly discredited book of a disgruntled Negro, William Thomas, written twenty-five years ago, may fit into a pattern of belief, and even be convincing in some quarters, but as fact of the present, could not be accepted by a reasonably careful person.

On Negro rural life in the South, Professor Dowd's principal authority is Sir Harry Johnston, an English traveler, though Professor Dowd himself has spent most of his life in the section. Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones's excellent study provides a foundation for the discussion of Negro education; but it is difficult to understand why, in the important references to Hampton Institute, his figures and facts are for 1915 and, in the case of Tuskegee, for 1911, the information in both cases being taken from the book of Maurice Evens, a travel writer from South Africa; or why the extraordinary educational program of the Rosenwald School Fund is in 1925 described from a 1916 report, before the work was fairly started. Although the full sociological emphasis of the book points to the need of social programs, the only large social organization working exclusively among Negroes, and in about forty cities expending close to a half million dollars, annually, is nowhere mentioned.

Professor Dowd provides a useful guide to books by and about the Negro and frequently gives direct quotations from them. This has definite sociological value. The generalization, however, that "nearly all of the Negro poets are mulattos," although it supports the theory stated elsewhere of the superiority of the mulatto through his white inheritance, happens to be as incorrect as it is irrelevant.

To the nature and solution of the problem, fully a third of the volume is devoted. The author has brought together, through wide reading, a formidable array of authorities, on both sides of the question of the equality of races. It is not at first clear what he would have us believe; where there is such disagreement among eminent scientists no sociologist should be expected to decide upon ultimate truth. He is, however, permitted his own beliefs, and Professor Dowd's are a compromise: All races of men have the same mental faculties, but, due to centuries of natural selection, they have not now equal capacity for adapting themselves to the same environmental conditions, nor for attaining to the same accomplishments. On the question of racial difference, however, Professor Dowd no longer supplies us with evidence on both sides of the question, but merely adduces an accumulative testimony of witnesses, scattered widely over time and space. Although his authorities support many of the items of popular un-

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scientific belief about such physical traits as the earlier closing of the frontal sutures, flat feet and thick cranium, these traits have little significance for discriminating students today. Burmeister, repeatedly quoted, published his observations in 1853. Best known as an entomologist, he saw Negroes first when on a fourteen-months' sick leave in Brazil, where, with no instruments for measuring, he watched slaves at work. As for his accuracy, it is enough to say that he lamented the clothing they wore, which he could not, even in the name of science, bring himself to request that they remove. The extensive anthropometric data from Negro and white army recruits gathered in 1917 are available, but not here mentioned. So with the psychical "traits" of the Negro. A weird synthesis of selected personal opinions constitutes the Negro "psyche," which Professor Dowd thinks will not undergo marked change for many generations. Professor Dowd shares with many other writers the error of attempting to categorize "the Negro" into a descriptive set of human traits; "the Negro" cannot be at the same time "childishly frank" and "untruthful," "intolerant of discipline" and "un-self-assertive," "easily irritated" and "happy-go-lucky," "courageous in fighting" and "cowardly," except in the sense that some Negroes are one thing and some another.

Proposed solutions are critically examined and for one reason or another discarded as unsatisfactory. Professor Dowd concludes that the problem probably will not be solved, but looks to better racial understanding, respect and tolerance, hopeful evidences of which he points out, to make living together possible.

The book is an impressive contribution to the literature of the race question; a contribution which, it is hoped, the research committees on the Negro which are now being formed will speedily amend.

CHARLES S. JOHNSON.

Metaphysical Acrobatics

The Close Chaplet, by Laura Riding Gottschalk. New York: The Adelphi Company. 77 pages. $1.50.

THIS volume, the first collection of Miss Gottschalk's poems, contains thirty-five interesting specimens of her work. If the reader, already familiar with her almost innumerable poems scattered in the course of the last few years through the magazines, find his own preferences not amply represented, he must reflect that Miss Gottschalk will not be held to the narrow bounds of a "first volume." At the outset of a career that must be, in the end, a brilliant success—for Miss Gottschalk, even Miss Gottschalk, performs those emotional revelations which give poetry by women much of its charm, if not its value—at the outset of her career, she has completed a bulk of poetry which a more finical artist might envy at middle age.

Her poems present astonishing successions of wit, irony, mystical vision, and metaphysical insight, and it is difficult to isolate the structural principle of the particular poem. Every poem refers its meaning to the shifting fantasy of sensation which is the personality of the poet; every poem lacks the integral finality of sharp objectivity. And the imaginative push of her lines too often resolves, not into the overtones of the more objective poet, but into mere obscurity. There is at least one exception, however, to this structural deficiency. The most successful poem in the book, The Quids, is not one of the most distinguished in intention, but it attains to a lucidity and realization which seem to have been made possible by deliberate adherence to a definite limitation in vocabulary and theme. The Quids, a metaphysical burlesque, is an essay in romantic wit; its effectiveness is due to the sudden juxtapositions in which the dry terms of the schools, somewhat bewildered, find themselves:

> The quids, that had never done anything before
> But be, be, be, be, be,
> The quids resolved to predicate
> And dissipate in a little grammar.

It is the only modern poem which succeeds with materials supposed, since the Renaissance, to be unpoetical: the cut-and-dried terms of rational systems. It is Miss Gottschalk's distinction, in this poem and in passages of others, to fuse into a single vision all the data of sensibility and thought. It is doubtless true that we are at the beginning of a new era; persons like Miss Gottschalk, Miss Adams, Mr. Hart Crane, and Mr. Archibald MacLeish, perhaps Mr. Read and Mr. Peter Quenell in England, yield the foundations of a school of poetry quite unlike anything in English since the seventeenth century.

It is not surprising, then, that the style of these poets, its mixed vocabulary, its rhetoric, should resemble the Elizabethan. But this style is in no sense pastiche. The similarity is due to similar intention, similar spiritual need. In the Elizabethan age, poetry was the index to culture as a whole, its apex and microcosm. It is quite possible, if poetry shall remain a major art, that it will return to that position. Poetry alone gathers up the discrete departments of the intellect into a humane and living whole. In such passages as these one may see the beginnings of a new attitude:

> Reel to the exile of my face, my face is fair.
> Your lips float down the deaf somnambulism of music,
> Are propelled by a true dream to drop
> Into their unutterable hollow hemisphere. . . .
> After the count of centuries numbers hang
> Heavy over the outnumbered heads and oppress
> The mind one woman has under her dress
> Gasping with chaos and giving out again
> Knowledge like an obsession to the street.

It must be observed, however, that while the distinct points of vision are creative and exact, the supporting structure is not there. One of the most important new American talents, gifted with the power and material of major poetry, Miss Gottschalk remains—in spite, or perhaps because of, the ambitious reach of her art—blind with the disorder of the age.

ALLEN TATE.

Main Street and Wall Street Meet in Harvard Square

Main Street and Wall Street, by William Z. Ripley. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 353 pages. $2.50.

THIS is one of the most useful and most exasperating books published in many a day. According to the author's preface, "it purports to go . . . down toward the root of things." With great industry, he has gathered and analyzed extensive records of recent abuses of corporate power, of discreditable financiering, of violated obligations to private investors and to the public. Here is the obvious basis for the opening note of warning: "Property should never be allowed to degenerate into an instrument of oppression."

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The progressive-minded man, wearied alike by revolutionary radicals and fatuous conservatives, will turn the pages hopefully. A scientist is going to reveal the vital facts in what he assures us is "really a study in the relation of property to civilization." Gradually it dawns upon us that our guide is concerned only with the safeguarding of investors, and that his text is announced on page 154:

> Only by having some voice in the handling of their material possessions will it be possible for people to perpetuate a civilization founded as on a bed rock, upon the institution of private property.

Gone is the glow inspired by the first page, where we were informed that the "only justification [for property] in a free state is that it shall contribute to such an equality of opportunity for all members of the community alike, that each one shall be more able to take care of and to make the best of himself." Now it appears that the author is concerned particularly with the oppression of small property owners by managers, and temporarily oblivious to the much more important oppression of property users.

> The prime fact confronting us as a nation is the progressive diffusion of ownership on the one hand and of [sic] the ever-increasing concentration of managerial power on the other.

Main Street, "our synonym for this phenomenon of widespread ownership," and Wall Street, meaning "the well known aggregation of financial and of directorial power in our great capital centres," have crossed—in Harvard Square. Professor Ripley, as the "proud and happy possessor of some shares" of Electric Bond and Share Company, is deeply concerned with the cavalier manner in which managers of industrial and public utility corporations conceal operations from investors and defraud those for whom they are trustees.

But Professor Ripley also mentions that "for ten years past it has been my privilege to serve as a director of the Rock Island Railway." From this vantage point he reports the surprising information that, when the Supreme Court decided in 1917 that "there can be nothing private or confidential in the activities or expenditures of a carrier engaged in interstate commerce"—"this shut off the railroads' activity in politics." How strange it is that the politicians do not know this yet, and that so many railroad agents carry on political activities and make political expenditures confidentially despite the ruling of the Supreme Court! The "slimy trail across the pages of our railway history" is now only history, we are told. The Transportation act of 1920 is given much credit as a constructive "piece of statesmanship" which is "far-reaching in its importance"—although one large division of this act has already been repealed because utterly ineffective, and the most important remaining provisions have proved to be unworkable and productive of intolerable injustice both to the public and to investors.

It is quite apparent that the Main Street investor and the Wall Street director have met in head-on collision—in Harvard Square. If Professor Ripley had only written in one character, what a good book this would be. His exposition of the evils and dangers of the irresponsible control of wealth is masterly, and has had already a profound effect, although his own estimate that, as a result, "non-voting common stock, then, bears every appearance of being dead—dead beyond recall," seems unduly optimistic.

But after such a revelation of a disease in the "bowels of American business"—where "matters are involved which concern not only the vitality of American industry but the very foundations of our civilization," the recommendations that baths, sunshine and talcum powder be administered seem pathetically inadequate. Perhaps bondholders should be given votes. Cumulative voting for stockholders is desirable. Investment trusts, independent auditors, protective committees might help. The Federal Trade Commission could do a great deal, although it is now possessed of an "apparently overwhelming disposition to commit hara-kiri." An exhaustive federal inquiry into the "whole subject of public utilities" is needed. Above all things *the* remedy is publicity—"the simple remedy of visibility."

"Publicity" has become a favorite cure-all of "constructive" statesmen who know that things are radically wrong but wish to avoid any "radical" suggestions for a cure. "Publicity" is safe and sane. Professor Ripley avows specifically that his book is "not a so-called muck-raking enterprise." He is even more candid when he says later:

> The first duty is to face the fact that there is something the matter. For a remedy I am groping as yet, like a child in the dark.

Then, in his groping down Main Street as an investor, he meets himself marching down Wall Street as a railroad director, and his readers, groping with him in a scientific inquiry, are suddenly dragged through a disheartening chapter of special pleading, entitled, Our Railroads—Safe Financial Common Carriers.

We are told that, through publicity and standardized accounts, all the "criteria of competent management" are available to guide expert opinion in appraising railroad securities. Yet the Interstate Commerce Commission has been engaged for months in a special investigation to ascertain the causes of the greatest railroad failure in our history. Other extensive special investigations have uncovered enormous waste and inefficiency, or something worse, in the matter of locomotive repairs. We are told that the "great experiment in physical valuation" will protect "honest investment," although shortly thereafter Professor Ripley himself points out that the carriers' demand for a reproduction valuation "provides but an unstable footing," which will bring disaster to investors "when prices once more return to their normal level."

The Nickel Plate consolidation, involving "a hoary financial practice under a new guise . . . was nipped in the bud" by the Commission, first observes Professor Ripley, and then he wonders whether "the Van Sweringen brothers, proponents of this project, have the courage and the public spirit to persevere in their worth-while endeavor."

"In one respect only does the railroad situation today appear unsatisfactory," concludes our Wall Street guide. "Thus far the Interstate Commerce Commission has been somewhat hesitant . . . in granting an adequate return upon these investments." But, happily, he points out that the Supreme Court (in the recent, indefensible Indianapolis Water Case) upholds a 7 percent rate of return. He suggests that perhaps the railroads can appeal for a similar favor. Then railroads, now earning from 10 to 20 percent for their "owners" under an "average" return fixed at 5¾ percent, might (with the aid of a "reproduction value") earn from 20 to 40 percent for these "owners." See what publicity, public regulation and the Supreme Court will do for investors protected by a "good" management that preys only on the users and never robs the owners of property!

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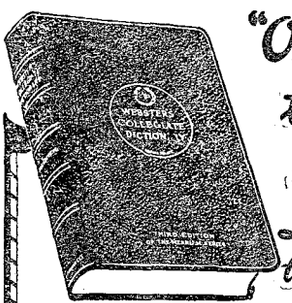

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Those who appreciate Professor Ripley's long and valuable services, in aiding public understanding and public handling of grave public problems, will probably smile through their tears, as they lay down this book. That the futile remedies of Main Street should be offered for the diseases of Wall Street will cause a smile; but tears may flow in gratitude for such a convincing demonstration that the moral irresponsibility of our newly arrived managing class menaces, not merely civil liberty and political democracy, but even the "bed-rock of civilization"—the institution of private property! The real revolutionists are at last revealed. DONALD R. RICHBERG.

One Small Voice

A Girl From China (Soumay Tcheng), by B. Van Vorst. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. 249 pages. $2.

SYMPATHETIC readers will probably be mildly disappointed in this story of a Chinese girl revolutionist who went the length of carrying dynamite into Peking and preparing to blast an official with her own hands. Possibly its naïve tone, which makes the young lady refer to her own "iron will" and "ruthlessness," is due rather to the transcriber, B. Van Vorst, than to Soumay Tcheng herself. But, although she now possesses, we are told, a "doctorat en droit" from the Sorbonne, and is going home to found a woman's party, there is no evidence here of anything more than a childish grasp of the problems of her country. Her politics are personal. Her version of history is much like the view of a Chinese city one gets by walking down one street. The street may be full of interesting things but the view is not extensive.

Soumay Tcheng's life seems to have been full of crises which might have been thrilling if any of their drama had been conveyed in the telling. The earlier chapters, devoted to girlhood memories, are the best told, and are certainly most valuable, since Chinese women have not spoken often to the West about their family lives and their need for freedom. As one voice from so great and so silent a section of humanity, Soumay Tcheng deserves her audience.

LYMAN BRYSON.

Contributors

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